2: Mitchell E-5 (1946-1949) 1956 FT7 Yao FT7

culties are settled by the marriage sureties [1] who only report to him after the affair is settled. In disputes of unusual gravity, the headman may call in unrelated persons [2] to arbitrate, but he himself must be present.

His own behaviour is expected to be exemplary. Any deviation from the norm is likely to be strictly censured, not only by his own villagers, but also by other village headmen, who may say, 'Important men do not behave in this way.' A man who had an argument with his sister's son was told this. He had taken the dispute to a neighbouring headman who decided against the village headman and rebuked him for behaving in a way not consonant with his position. Village headmen should be above squabbling with their villagers. A village headman who was also a leech had virtually raped a woman whom he was treating. He tried to maintain this was part of the treatment. Her matrilineal relatives reported the matter to the headman of her village and he brought the errant headman in front of the chief who said, 'You are wrong to do this when you are an important man. You are a big man and you act as a commoner does. You ought to be able to show the commoners how to behave.' He was made to pay a compensation of £2 10*s.* and fined 10*s.* Had he been a commoner he would have been made to pay a compensation of only 30*s.*

The ultimate sanction to which all headmen are subject, is that their people will leave them if they behave badly. This was the fate of Cikumba.

In 1944 Cikumba had a village of about 30 huts. The son of the first Cikumba, Meya, had two wives who were living virilocally in Cikumba's village. Meya had enlisted in the army. While he was away, Cikumba, the village headman who was Meya's father's sister's son (though he called him 'father' because of positional succession), started taking Meya's two wives to beer drinks. Meya's sister one day asked Cikumba about his behaviour, but he only said that Meya could not do anything as he was far away. Things had gone too far, however, when one morning he was seen coming out of the

[1] The representative of a spouse in all affairs arising from conjugal relationships. They are usually senior matrilineal relatives. See Chap. VI, pp. 176–7. Their rôle is discussed fully in *Marriage among the Machinga Yao of Southern Nyasaland*.

[2] *Mundu juampambali*, i.e. a person from outside.

622 hut of one of Meya's wives. Meya's sister wrote a letter to tell him
558 of this and he replied that he could do nothing until he returned.
837 In 1946, Meya returned to be demobilized. The third night after his
166 return he questioned his wives about their fidelity during his absence. They at first held out against him but before long he intimidated them into admitting that they had slept with the village headman. Meya now went to complain to Mapata, who was Cikumba's perpetual mother's brother, and he said that he would come to the village the next day.

When Mapata came he confronted Cikumba with the accusation. Cikumba denied it until Mapata called the women. When they confessed Cikumba was forced to admit his guilt. Mapata now decided to call in an arbitrator, Isa, an important but unrelated headman who lived close at hand. Isa said he would come the following day when the matter could be thrashed out. When Isa and Mapata came they asked the women about the affair in public. They admitted the charge and Cikumba did not deny it. Isa then remonstrated with him for being a bad man and said that he was ashamed to hear about it. Cikumba had to pay £6 10s. to the injured man, Meya, who, however, refused to take it. He argued that Cikumba ought to have behaved as a father to him. But Cikumba had not. He, Meya, could not remain living in the village because his wives would be as Cikumba's wives. Isa said that he could not object because Cikumba had caused the trouble and had broken the village himself. How could he complain? Meya took two-thirds of the huts in the village away with him.

The Headman as a Representative of a Corporate Group

622 The headman is not only responsible for keeping the peace
689 between the members of his village, but he is also supposed to control his members in their relationships with other villages. If members take corporate action against other villages, even if they do so without the consent of the headman, the chief will consider the village headman responsible. This was brought out clearly in the relationships between Cikoja, Mapata and Masimbo in Chiwalo's section.

622 Cikoja and Mapata are two of the more important headmen in
689 Chiwalo's section. Masimbo is a minor village headman who lives
423 in Mapata's village area. The quarrel arose over the question of
226 fishing rights in a small pool lying between the two main villages. This pool was excavated by Cikoja and his villagers in 19[illegible]ng

3: Stannus D-5 (ca. 1912) 1922 FT7 Yao FT7

585 drum of her married life begins. The man and woman live together peaceably enough as
462 a rule, each attending to his own sphere of work. The man builds the house, the woman
mads the floors; she sweeps and cooks, she is the hewer of wood and drawer of water. The man hunts, fishes, makes mats, baskets, the grain store, game traps, and bark-cloth; he looks after the tobacco, and makes the snuff, while his wife brews the beer. He it is who fashions the gourd vessels and carves the spoons, while the woman is the potter (Pl. III, 4) and pipe-maker. Together they hoe and together they harvest, but to the woman falls the monotonous drudgery of pounding and sifting the corn for flour.

842 The Yao have a custom like that of the Anyanja. A sister brings to the house of the
newly wedded pair a log of green wood from a *mbanga* tree which is very hard; the log
[522] may be two feet in diameter and four feet long. Should the bride not become pregnant
before it is burned away, the husband is laughed at and they may both be teased by having
● [558] many logs brought to the house. A man who has no children is much despised and there is a saying, "He must have eaten some ground-nuts," punning on the word for a thick-skinned variety of ground-nut, *chimbuzila*, a word which also means sterility. An impotent
[837] man may, with the consent of his wife, introduce some male friend into the house, any children born in consequence being claimed as the husband's. He usually chooses some friend from a distance to obviate any attachment springing up between him and the wife. Two married couples may, all consenting, exchange consorts for the night, but they never live together like this for long periods.

582 There is one well-defined marriage taboo; a man may not marry a woman of his own
clan. In the old days, he was also restricted to his own tribe, except in the case of slave
[611] wives and wives by capture. Since the clan is inherited from the mother,[1] a man may not
marry the daughters of his maternal aunts, but he may marry his other female cousins.
[587] He may not marry two sisters nor a deceased wife's sister; neither do two brothers marry two sisters.

595 The number of wives is limited only by the husband's ability to provide for them. In addition to free wives, a man might formerly have a number of slave wives. The head wife is called *kusyeto*, the other wives, *mangumbo*. The word given by Macdonald, *akusyeto*,[2] meaning the junior wives, is a Chinyanja word and, I think, wrongly applied.

582 It has been said that a man always marries into the village of his wife. For this reason,
[842] female children are always prized as it means an increase in the number of able-bodied men added to the village. In rare cases, the wife might be taken to the husband's village,
[583] as is the Anyanja practice.[3] This, of course, is true in the case of chiefs and headmen. Here, we may also note that no payment is made for the wife and no dowry is received with her.

584 To revert to betrothal, occasionally the sponsors will not agree to the marriage and a
843 runaway match takes place, but in the end, the marriage is usually regularized by the sponsors coming to an agreement. If, however, the woman has in the meantime become

[1] Vide infra, p. 283. [2] Op. cit., p. 134. [3] Stannus, op. cit., p. 309.

539 20. *Wasikile galasaya ukasi!*
He was "let in" badly over the fish-sticks!

A man had put a lot of fish on spits to roast round the fire. While he went to get some more firewood, a thief came and took all the fish. A stranger then approached and was examining one of the sticks, saying, "There must have been a very nice fat fish on this stick," when the owner returned and immediately accused the innocent stranger of stealing his fish. A native coming across a corpse will run away, using the above expression; for if he reports the matter, he may be the first to be accused.

21. *Sungula wa wakechele (mwanache) wa wasile!*
The impotent man had born to him a child in a joke!

[842 A native man who is impotent is very much looked down on and he is the laughing
● 558] stock of the village. He is constantly made fun of by the women. The story goes that such a man when being chaffed, said, "All right, let me have the prettiest girl in the village," and they said, "All right, old *sungula*, you can do her no harm." But it came to pass that she became pregnant and the women were disgraced. The meaning of the expression is: what is done as a joke may become a reality.

22. *Mwaka wingi ng'ombe nga nyama unandi!*
Days many, hairs of an animal few!

There are more days than there are hairs in an animal's coat! If A has done a good turn to B, and B behaves badly to A, A will remonstrate, using the above expression, meaning, "You may want my help again some day, but I shall then refuse and you will suffer."

23. *Chilambo changalinga makono!*
The (country) earth cannot (be) measured in cubits!

Meaning, "You never know when you may want return for your good deeds.

24. *Kuswela kunilanya, kunuka kulijimiya! or kupanga pa moto!*
To be generous (is) to save up, to be stingy (is) to deny oneself! or to throw in the fire!

Kindness returns to the doer.

25. *Uwili uhalo, ujiko wangalikunda kunyuma!*
Two-ness (is) good, oneness he cannot rub the back!

Ku-kunda = to rub the back of another person while bathing, a thing a native appreciates very much. An expression often used with the meaning, "There is safety in numbers," (*wingi ukalo!*)

26. *Kulanga ukwaliukwilile!*
Being in a state of poverty, one must not hang (oneself)!

Ku-langa = to be poor, to be in trouble. Do not give up hope.

27. *Kwichilaga kujangalila kwinuga!*
Having become rich one must jump for joy in the dark corner of the house.